



South Dakota Cowgirl Becomes K-Stater To Lead 'Purple Team' At 'Best Ever' Rodeo

Standing-room-only made for enthusiasm for what veteran attendees contended was "the best ever K-State Rodeo."

While more than 3,500 spectators crowded into bleacher seats at Manhattan's Weber Arena for Saturday night's performance, KSU Rodeo Team Coach Doug Muller said Sunday's crowd was near that number.

"We had great attendance each of the four performances, and people of all ages were here," Muller contended. "There was a large contingency of students who really loved the atmosphere this year."

Fort Scott Community College took top men's team honors, solidifying their rankings as the highest-ranked team in the Central Plains Region. Second for the men was Coffeyville Community College, while Pratt Community College placed eighth, and Kansas State University ranked 10th at the rodeo advertised and promoted heavily on The BIG 94.5 Country FM Radio.

In the women's category, Southwestern Oklahoma State University was the winner, reinforcing their rank as the top region team. Kansas women's team rankings were Colby, third; Garden City, fourth; K-State, fifth, and Fort Scott, seventh.

The house arose in the loudest applause of the Sunday short-go-round when Cally Thomas, representing the "home-town purple team," swerved her Quarter Horse around the cloverleaf pattern (www.dalehirschman.com photo) in just 12.18 seconds.

Coupled with her 12.51-seconds second-place run Saturday night, Thomas was the barrel racing average winner, worth \$1,032, second largest pay of the competition.

Only larger payout was to all-around women's titlist, Kelsie Chase, Southwestern Oklahoma State, who won both go-round en route to being the average winner of breakaway roping in 5.6 seconds, worth \$1,057. Emily Miller, Garden City Community College, tied for the women's all-around award.

K-State's other spotlight performer was JD Holland, who as the heeler teamed with Brett Christenson of Northwestern Oklahoma State, to be third in the team roping average in 14.5 seconds, worth \$521, to each cowboy.

Hailing from the Thomas Ranch at Harrold, South Dakota, Cally Thomas has a life-long career of livestock successes. So, why did a South Dakota cowgirl come to Kansas State? "I wanted to participate on the livestock judging team," she rationalized.

Like many rodeo athletes, Thomas balances her time studying, practicing livestock judging and training her barrel horses, Bugeta and Flash.

Obviously, it has paid off with her earnings at the K-State Rodeo, where she moved into fifth place in the Central Plains Region standings, just ahead of sixth-place teammate Blair Askew, K-State barrel racer from Goddard, who was unable to collect a check at her home-college rodeo.



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Padre says:

"To be a friend is to help someone else stand in the sunlight even while we may be standing in the shadows."